

Peduncles one to three in the axils, the upper branches about eight lines long, each bearing an umbel of usually five pedicellate flowers. Bracts three or four obtuse small ones on the lower half of the peduncle and an involucre of similar ones close under the pedicels. Pedicels about six lines long, articulate just below the calyx. Calyx two lines long, teeth nearly equal, slightly pubescent inside. Standard flabelliform, emarginate, yellow with purple centre about three lines wide. Wings nearly as long as standard. Keel shorter, yellowish with purple tips. Pod flat about five lines long. Seeds usually solitary, oblong, mottled, with large strophiole. Flowering in September and November.

*Hab.* Eight Mile Plains, Logan Road.

The specific name is in honour of Dr. Wm. Wyatt, a great promoter of Botany and Horticulture in South Australia.

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NOTES ON THE HABITS OF THE BLACK BREASTED BUZZARD,  
*Gypoictinia melanosternon*, Gould.

BY K. H. BENNETT, Esq.

The range of this bird—so far as my experience goes—is confined to the plains which border the banks of the Murrumbidgee and Lachlan Rivers, and the wide expanse of open country on the north bank of the latter stream appears to be its especial habitat, for it is most frequently seen in that locality, and here also on several occasions I have discovered its nests. Its prey to a great extent, consists of various reptiles—such as snakes frill-necked, and sleepy lizards—it also has the singular habit of robbing the nests of Emus and Wild Turkeys (Bustards) of their eggs. My first information on this point I obtained from the blacks, and for some time I was inclined to disbelieve their assertion though the same story was told by blacks from all parts of the district, as it was so contrary to my experience of the *Accipiter* family. At length, however, I was compelled to

alter my opinion, for I subsequently found portions of Emu egg shells in the nest of one of these Buzzards. The manner in which they effect the abstraction of the Emu eggs—as told me by the blacks—shows an amount of cunning and sagacity that one would scarcely give the bird credit for, and is as follows:—“On discovering a nest, the Buzzard searches about for a stone, or what is much more frequently found here, a hard lump of calcined earth. Armed with this the Buzzard returns (and should the Emu be on the nest) alights on the ground some distance off, and approaches with outstretched flapping wings, the Emu alarmed at this, to it, strange looking object, hastily abandons the nest and runs away, the Buzzard then takes quiet possession, and with the stone breaks a hole in the side of each egg into which it inserts its claw and carries them off at its leisure; for when the eggs are broken the Emu abandons the nest.” So much for the blacks’ story!

This however, is in a great measure corroborated by a friend of mine, who lives on the adjoining Station, and who told me that in August last, he found the nest of an Emu containing five eggs, and that all of them had a hole broken in the side, and that the fracture had been done quite recently, and in the nest also was one of these lumps of calcined earth about the size of a man’s fist.

In a nest to which I recently ascended, I found amongst the remains of various reptiles, the shells of a couple of Bustards’ eggs. In this nest were a couple of young Buzzards lately hatched.

I think after all this testimony there can be little doubt of its nest-robbing proclivities, a habit which I think is peculiar to this bird, and is not shared by any other member of the Accipiter family so far as I know. I have often asked the blacks, if the Wedge-tailed Eagle robs nests, but they always say no.

The nest of this bird is a rough structure, generally placed on a forked horizontal branch, and is often quite as large as that of

the Wedge-tailed Eagle. It lays two eggs, which in colour and shape resemble those of the above mentioned bird, but are much smaller. Length 2·16 by 1·85, being strongly blotched with bright rust-red, with spots and dots of the same colour.

It usually lays about the middle of August, and the young leave the nest about the beginning of December. If undisturbed the old birds resort year after year to the same nest, but should it be robbed, they abandon it for ever, and it is never occupied by birds of the same species again, although other species of hawks, notably the brown hawk—(*Hieracidea orientalis*) sometimes takes possession. I have never known the Buzzard to touch carrion, or to feed upon anything that it did not capture, and except at the nest I have never seen them perch on a tree, but I have often seen them alight on the ground. The note which is something between a whistle and a scream is only uttered when visiting the nest.

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GESNERACEÆ OF AUSTRALIA.

BY THE REV. DR. WOOLLS, D.D., F.L.S., &c.

The order of Gesnerworts is for the most part tropical or semi-tropical, and the species are generally valued for the beauty of their flowers. The two suborders, into which the order is divided (viz. *Gesneræ* and *Cyrtandreæ*), have a very different geographical distribution, for whilst the former is limited to the warmer parts of America, the latter extends to different regions of the world, especially in the East. It was not until 1823, when the eminent Explorer and Botanist Allan Cunningham visited Mount Tomah, that any species of the order were known to exist in Australia. The notice of *Fieldia australis*, which was subsequently referred to the *Gesneraccæ*, is thus recorded in a paper of Cunningham's in Hooker's Journal of Botany, Vol. IV., p. 286 : "A climbing, rooting-stemmed plant adhering to the trunks of the tree-ferns is very general in these shaded woods, where it